DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 204 949 EC 133 520

AUTHOR Smith, Rose-Marie
TITLE Give the Parents a Chance.
PUB DATE Apr 81
NOTE 16p.: Paper presented at the Annual International Convention of The Council for Exceptional Children (59th, New York, NY, April, 1981, Session T-34).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Auditory Training: *Communication Disorders: *Early Childhood Education: *Hearing Impairments: Interaction: *Language Acquisition: Listening Skills: *Parent Child Relationship: *Parent Education: Visual Learning

ABSTRACT

The author describes a Parent-Infant Program in which parents are trained to develop listening skills in their children with communication handicaps, which may or may not be accompanied by hearing impairments. Parents are seen in clinic settings, the Home Demonstration Center, in groups, and in their child's nursery class. The quality of the interaction between parent and child is significant in the development of language competence. General parent behaviors which facilitate interaction are showing physical affection, recognizing the child's focus of attention, and notifying the child when he is being addressed. Following structuring of the environment, the child should be taught to be aware of sound, attend to speech, and recognize the parent's verbal stimulus. The greater the hearing loss, the more the child will rely on vision to compensate: therefore parents should know about the need for sufficient light, the necessity to present the best possible speech patterns, and the importance of allowing the child to "eye" the speaker. Language, particularly for the hearing impaired child, should be frequent, personal, and meaningful. (SB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Rose-Marie Smith
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED204949

GIVE THE PARENTS A CHANCE

Council for Exceptional Children Conference
New York City, April 12-17, 1981

Rose-Marie Smith, M.Ed.

Helping parents to become knowledgeable about their role in the growth and development of their young child has been the focus of the Parent-Infant Program at Central Institute for the Deaf. The program I will be discussing today is that described by Audrey Simmons-Martin (Simmons-Martin, 1978). While it was begun in 1958, the program was refined into a demonstration model in 1970 and since that time it has had assistance from the HCEEP in the Office of Special Education. Based upon our findings of the efficacy of the program we were validated in 1977 by the Joint Dissemination and Review Panel of the U.S. Office of Education. In 1978 we were designated as a Developer/Demonstrator of a project that they define as an "Educational Program that Works". Since then we have been both a demonstrator and an Outreach activity. (Copies of the efficacy report are available if you care to pick up one.)

EC135820

We know that there can be no single solution to planning a program for parents of children with communication handicaps, however, in our plan parents are shown how to encourage their child to talk, to label his world, and to respond. As parents focus on the development of listening skills, they soon learn, if their child has a loss, that the greater the impairment the more informa-

tion the child must receive by looking at the face and mouth of the speaker. Therefore, strategies for getting and holding the child's visual attention are also stressed. Of even greater importance is the necessity for the parent to be responsive.

Parents are given guidance in order to help their child develop his full range of human abilities. They learn about children and child growth. They learn to demonstrate affection. They learn about language and cognitive development. But most importantly for the parent of a deaf child they learn how these areas are affected by a hearing impairment.

Our population comes from a broad geographical area within the central midwest. We offer services to families with children from birth to mandated school age. All of the children have a communication handicap, which may or may not be accompanied by a hearing loss. We have found that families of children without a hearing problem nevertheless need to learn how to provide a rich language learning environment. Many of the children have one or more handicaps in addition to deafness. While I will refer to parents throughout my talk I am talking about primary caregiver who may be someone other than the mother. We know that a hearing-impaired child effects the entire family and it is often another family member who assumes the role of caregiver. Each family has different skills and needs different strategies.

We have found that our families can be best served through individual programming. This gives the parent a chance to develop those behaviors he or she requires the most.

The following behaviors have been described in print but since the book is still in press, I will discuss them briefly here (Simmons-Martin, In press):

General Parent-Child Behavior

Parental Behavior Regarding Auditory Speech Perception

Parental Behavior Regarding Visual Speech Perception

Language Behavior

Parents are seen in clinic settings, in the Home Demonstration Center, in groups, and in their child's nursery classes. In the clinics the child's hearing and language are assessed and parents are counseled by the audiologists. The groups, sometimes led by a social worker, are both supportive and informative. In the nursery classes emphases is put on the child's interactive behavior with his peers.

The core of our Parent-Infant Program, however, consists of weekly sessions. Each family meets individually with a teacher/counselor who is a teacher of the deaf skilled in counseling and working with parents of young children. These sessions take place in a home demonstration center which provides a setting that is similar to that of an average home environment. It is

in their own home that parents have the critical roles in the development of child's language and cognitive ability. Therefore, in the Home Demonstration setting we give the parents a chance to develop their natural ability to stimulate, to respond, and to interact with their child for the purpose of developing the child's communication skill.

GENERAL PARENT-CHILD BEHAVIOR

We know that the ability to interact with other humans is the most important thing that parents teach young children. However, it has been our experience that in addition to their natural ability all parents need help in learning to communicate with their hearing impaired children. We also know the most significant factor in the child's development of competence is the quality of interaction between parent and child. This manifests itself in all areas of development. There is a positive correlation between social, cognitive and linguistic development of the child and the parent's ability to relate to him.

While language competence is the basic goal for the handicapped child the parental competence we seek is syncrony with their child. The ability of the parent to interact is based upon his understanding of his child and his problems and his sensitivity to those needs.

Although the hearing-impaired child has greater need to experience this interaction he is less able to elicit it from his parent.. Because of his handicap, his responses to his parent are less consistent and his parent must assume greater responsibility for this dyad. Therefore in the Parent-Infant Program we intervene and give the parent a chance to acquire skills which strengthen the parent-child interaction in order to nurture learning, especially language learning.

Brown (1977) described and organized the features of early communication to babies as on one hand, those concerned with affection and on the other, as those concerned with communication competence.

Initially we may find that bonding between parent and hearing-impaired children is poor. Parents often need help establishing their behavior as loving parents. Parents of hearing-impaired children must realize the importance of showing affection physically. Just as they need to be able to interpret and respond to the child's mood.

Parents of young hearing-impaired children need to learn to recognize the focus of their child's attention. The content of most communication with young children consists of <u>his</u> actions, <u>his</u> possessions, and <u>the</u> objects in the immediate environment.

These items, which are his and are of the "here and now", elicit interest. This interest needs structure. Parents must notify the child when he is being addressed. They need to know the importance of making eye contact, offering an object or pointing to it and then talking about it. It might be toys the child can play with, food he may eat or clothing he puts on. The parent's acknowledgement of the child's interest will serve as a model for behaviors later expected of the child. The parent needs to learn to follow the child's gaze and label whatever it is he is perceiving. The parent may also need to attract the child's attention to the object or activity before focusing on the topic. They must learn that mutual interest can provide the framework for communication.

Behavioral Competence

Successful development of children requires that parents be knowledgeable about child growth and development and be skilled in applying this information. The child's progress is influenced by his parents acceptance of his behavior both verbal and non verbal. Tone of voice conveys parental authority as well as acceptance. Discipline and self control are communicated by the "super parent" as he assumes the role of authority without becoming a disciplinarian (White, 1973). In spite of his hearing loss, the deaf child needs to learn realistic limits and his parents need to learn control. Because the child is handicapped this may be extremely difficult for parents to learn. We who

endeavor to teach parents of handicapped children must always be sensitive to the parent's difficulties in acquiring these skills. They need to set limits, be consistent and be clear in their demands (Lane, 1975).

Sound is an important part of the child's bond with his mother. Parents must recognize that the voice contains crucial information to which their child must learn to listen even if he is hearing impaired.

PARENTAL BEHAVIOR: REGARDING AUDITORY SPEECH PERCEPTION

If the child is hearing impaired his parents may look to the hearing aid, that "magic box" as the tool for teaching their child to listen. As professionals we are aware of the positive aspects of the hearing aid, but we also know of its limitations. Parents must learn this also. At the same time they must be knowledgeable about providing their child with a listening environment which will make use of his residual hearing.

Needless to say, the use of residual hearing is far more complex than just placing a hearing aid on the child. We have found that all hearing-impaired children have significant amounts of residual sensory capacity. This residual, if trained, will greatly facilitate the child's speech acquisition but only to the degree that the youngster is taught to listen. Training to listen involves giving active attention to spoken language and thereby

deriving meaning.

Listening is not intuitive but rather something that a child learns to do as he learns to perceive in the other sense modalities. Listening unlike walking, does not develop naturally by the child on his own.

Just giving a hearing-impaired child a hearing aid without training to listen is futile. The training to listen must pervade his entire day. Listening is not something done at a given time with a set procedure. However, the focus can be on several tasks--structuring the situation, awareness of sound, awareness of speech and auditory recognition.

Structuring the Situation

The child's auditory perceptual system may be seriously impaired and permit speech to be analyzed only as gross patterns. Nevertheless, he must not be limited in the quality or quantity of his daily auditory experiences. A noisy home makes it very difficult to learn any language through his ears. And, parents must be able to structure the situation and provide a better setting.

Awareness of Sound

Attending to sound is an early stage of auditory training. The signals can be either environmental or linguistic. Certainly the informal training provided by the parent in the home is not

sufficient but is in keeping with our global approach to child development. We do not believe that the parent should have to provide "listening activities" that require full-time involvement (Erber, 1976). We suggest that listening experiences be part of ongoing activities so that the child remains interested.

Awareness of Speech

The auditory signal of greatest importance is the human voice. Therefore, the primary job of the parent of the hearing-impaired child is to assist the child in attending and responding to speech. Parents must communicate with children in a manner which reflects their belief that the child is capable of reciprocating. This attitude is the basis of the turn-taking model. From this model, the foundation for reciprocity is created and the context for learning is provided.

Intonation patterns play an important part in language development and they are available to profoundly deaf children. Intonation is the most salient feature in language addressed to the child. Most importantly, intonation serves as a social function. One must pay attention in a conversation in order to know when it is one's turn to speak or the turn termination is indicated by the drop in voice (Garnica, 1977). The tone of the parent's voice should be rich in rising and falling contours appropriate to the message. The hearing-impaired child must also learn that listening can be enjoyable and even exciting.

Auditory Recognition

Auditory recognition though not involving comprehension is a preliminary step in auditory training. It proceeds from the general to the specific as does all learning in small children and may always be very gross for some profoundly deaf children. While ideally we would like to think of auditory recognition as an unisensory event, in reality it may be through looking as well as listening that a child recognizes the parent's verbal stimulus. The parent should provide auditory stimulus but not insist upon its recognition through hearing alone.

If only one sensory channel, e.g., audition is available for learning oral communication, profoundly deaf children would be at a tremendous loss. Children with profound losses need to receive considerable information through lipreading in order to comprehend speech. This does not say that the profoundly deaf do not benefit from the auditory training but instead they understand spoken language bettern when they look as well as listen (Van Uden, 1970).

PARENTAL BEHAVIOR: REGARDING VISUAL SPEECH PERCEPTION

Parents of hearing impaired children should be made aware that the greater the hearing loss the more the child will rely on vision to compensate. Their child's comprehension of speech is improved through a combination of auditory and visual perception and it is necessary to understand the conditions which are conducive to speech

reading. Parents need to know about the need for sufficient light for optimal speechreading conditions. They also need to be aware that the light must be on their faces so that the child does not look into the light. It is important that the parent present a full view of his face to the child so that the child may be able to see the place of articulation. If the parent gets to the child's eye level and makes visual contact it will help the child understand that he is being addressed. Parents need to provide a minimum of visual distractions like gestures or actions while encouraging the child to attend to the speaker.

Visual information also effects the speech production of hearing-impaired children. Therefore, parents should present the best possible speech patterns to their child in their effort to enhance his speech production. This includes speaking clearly without exaggeration. Rate of speech should be adjusted to closely resemble the reduced rate of speech which parents of hearing infants use (Nelson, 1973). When expressing emotion or attitudes parents should use appropriate pitch, stress, duration and intensity cues so that the child can perceive the entire idea.

Parents should insure the use of the residual hearing and allow the child to "eye" the speaker in order that he perceive both auditory and visual information. He needs to learn to look just as he needs to learn to listen.

PARENTAL BEHAVIORS: LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Speechreading and audition are tools used by hearing impaired children for acquisition of language. They, like all children, learn language gradually. They acquire the "bits and pieces" as it were, over time as a result of exposure to linguistic data in meaningful situations (Brown, 1977). They observe and learn, and eventually they begin to produce utterances. The child's task is seen as being that of matching the organization of language with the cognitive organization drawn from his experience. Although we do not fully understand how children acquire language it is apparent that the very young infant uses vocalization to get people to come to him and provide for him. We are also aware that it is necessary for the parent to recognize different vocalizations as indicators of differing needs and responds accordingly. Appropriate and deliberate parental response to the child's communication appears to provide the child with a strong motivation for language development.

We know that children learn language through repetition. In the home environment there are numerous chances for multiple experiences with the same word. When the parent also recognizes that children learn through repetition he will understand the necessity for utilizing opportunities for repetition. For example, she may use the same word in several experiences as: "Roll the ball", "We need a roll of towels", "Did you eat your roll?"

Parents soon recognize that for all children, especially those who are hearing impaired, language must be frequent, personal, and meaningful. The child must learn that language can function for him. Therefore, the focus of language must be on the content rather than the form. He needs to learn the "system" for communicating with others. His experiences must include numerous opportunities for development of concepts. Parents can provide abundant opportunities for development of concepts. Appropriate linguistic concepts should be given the child so that he may manipulate, store, and eventually retrieve information. He needs to understand how to communicate and be motivated to do so. Experience is a vital prerequisite for language acquisition. Parents can provide much of this necessary first hand experience for their child. Parents should be given a chance to recognize their role while interacting with their child. They serve as reinforcers of the linguistic behavior of their child only in terms of responding and, thereby, stimulating vocal and verbal productivity and shaping his responses.

The parent who is the first language teacher, purposely or not, presents the linguistic data to the child. The most striking characteristic of parental language is its relevance to the child, his needs, and his environment. The parent understands the necessity of speaking in situations which aid the child's comprehension and then waiting for the child to respond.

We concur with Brown (1977) who concluded his chapter in

Snow and Ferguson's (1977) text by answering the question, "How can a concerned mother facilitate her child's learning of language?"

> "Believe that your child can understand more than he or she can sya, and seek, above all, to communicate. To understand and be understood. To keep you minds fixed on the same target, In doing that, you will, without thinking about it, make 100 or maybe 1000 alterations in your speech and action. Do not try to practice them as such. There is no set of rules of how to talk to a child that can even approach what you unconsciously know. If you concentrate on communicating, everything else will follow."
>
> p. 26

I would like to summarize this presentation with the following slides.

Bibliography

Brown, R. Introduction to Talking to Children: Language Input and Acquisition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Erber, N. The Use of Audio Tape-Cards in Auditory Training for Hearing-Impaired Children, Volta Review, 78, 1976, 209-218.

Garnica, O. Some Prosodic and Paralinguistic Features of Speech to Young Children, in Talking to Children: Language Input and Acquisition, edited by C. Snow & C. Ferguson, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Lane, H. A Psychologist Talks to Johnny's Parents, in Chats With Johnny's Parents by A. Simmons-Martin, Washington, D.C.: A.G. Bell Association, 1975.

Nelson, K. Structure and Strategy in Learning to Talk, Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, #149, 38, nos. 1 & 2, 1973.

Simmons-Martin, A. Early Management Procedures for the Hearing Impaired Child, Pediatric Audiology, Frederich Martin (Ed.), Englewood Cliffs; N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978.

Simmons-Martin, A. Acquisition of Language by Under-Fives: Including the Parental Role, Proceedings of International Symposium on Deafness: Oral Education Today and Tomorrow, Ann Mulholland (Ed.), Washington, D.C.: A.G. Bell Association, (In press).

Van Uden, A. New Realizations in the Light of the Pure Oral Method, The Volta Review, 1970, 524-527.

White, B. & Watts, J. Experience and Environment: Major Influences on the Development of the Young Child, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1973.